

Learned and Vernacular Literature in Byzantium: Dichotomy or Symbiosis?

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Ἐγὼ τοιγαροῦν ἐμὸν μὲν οὐδέν.¹ By starting my paper with this well-known phrase of John of Damascus, I intend to apologize for the fact that in principle other scholars² have already found out what I am going to say now. But still following the example of John's Πηγὴ γνώσεως I think it worth repeating, summarizing, and perhaps completing current statements and views. And if I seem to be telling something new, it will nearly always be the sources themselves speaking. Another apology concerns terminology: as clear-cut modern definitions can only with difficulty be applied to the often vague conditions of Byzantium, the linguistic aspects will be supplemented by more literary ones, so that it will be necessary to use terms like "vernacular," "demotic," "popular" sometimes interchangeably, the main aim being to show developments, tendencies, and connections concerning both language and literature.

Although scholars have not been inclined to transpose to Byzantine literature the former conflict between καθαρεύουσα and δημοτική in modern Greek, the outward appearance of a clear dichotomy in learned and vernacular literature lasts, especially in the manuals, bibliography, and lexica. Therefore I shall try to put forward some evidence refuting this customary practice and extend my remarks partly to the division between theological and secular literature as well as to the question of genres.

First we shall have to answer the question: when did vernacular Byzantine literature begin and what can be its criteria? Traditionally, historians of Byzantine literature since Karl Krumbacher place its beginnings in the twelfth century and have defined it first by the use of demotic Greek and second by its contents. Thus language must be the main point of departure, occasionally supplemented by a possible popularity of themes. Theoretically, there might be a further criterion for defining Byzantine popular literature as well as the entirety of Byzantine literature, namely its origin within the borders of Byzantium or at least of Greek medieval states (in order to include Trebizond, Epirus, and Morea). But this criterion has to be rejected, or authors of the Orient (like John Moschos, John of Damascus, Kosmas of Jerusalem, Bartholomew of Edessa), of Cyprus and Crete (like Machairas, Dellaporta, Sachlikes), as well as hagiographers and poets

¹John of Damascus, ed. B. Kotter, I (Berlin, 1969), 55.9.

²cf., e.g., R. Browning, *Medieval and Modern Greek*, 2nd ed., (Cambridge, 1983), as well as "The Language of Byzantine Literature" in his *History, Language and Literacy in the Byzantine World* (Northampton, 1989), part XV.

from Sicily and southern Italy would have to be excluded. However, we must keep in mind this geographical aspect, for it cannot be accidental that a great deal of the literary production, which was subject to a more or less demotic influence, was composed either outside of Constantinople or beyond the borders of the Byzantine Empire.

So, when exactly did Byzantine "Volksliteratur" begin? Certainly before the twelfth century, although its definitive establishment could perhaps be seen as coinciding with the simultaneous appearance of a separate vernacular literature in the medieval West. The sixth to the eleventh century must be considered as a preparatory phase (chronography, especially John Malalas, and hagiography), the tendency being apparently strengthened in the Dark Ages after George of Pisidia, but restrained in the age of Photios and later by Symeon Metaphrastes. Besides chronography and hagiography, the occasional insertions of some exclamations by the people against emperors (especially Maurice) and sometimes popular proverbs, transmitted by *De ceremoniis* and certain chronographers, are usually considered as forerunners of the vernacular.

At least since Krumbacher³ and George Hatzidakis⁴ we are very well aware of the fact that a great deal of the so-called Vulgärgriechische Literatur is by no means composed in a consistent δημοτική according to the development of medieval Greek, but in a sort of mixture of old and new forms and words. Should we not consider this not so much as an incapacity of their (often anonymous) authors to observe a certain stylistic level, but as a tendency to bridge the linguistic breach? Therefore we could perhaps restrict the sphere of "hochsprachliche Profanliteratur" and widen that of "Volksliteratur" by allotting to the former only the rather pure Atticized works and leaving all those not perfectly fitting into this framework to vernacular literature. However, there is not only a question of language level, but of themes and genres, too. In any case, scholars of Byzantine studies have been mostly used to accepting a rather strong contrast between learned and popular literature. This contrast (not clearly delimited from or within theological literature) is mainly founded upon the evident intention of the literary circles, especially at the court of Constantinople, to emulate ancient writers, a phenomenon somewhat simplistically called "Atticism." But on the other hand, as Byzantium in many aspects of life evidently had been a combination of old and new elements, so to say an empire of both the New and Old Center, why shouldn't this be true of literature, too? And couldn't it be that this opposition sometimes is only an apparent one, somehow concealed by medieval and modern tradition?

In the last decades much attention has been paid to simplified paraphrases, especially in the case of Byzantine historians. In fact, we may suppose that at least during the last centuries of Byzantium, when the distance between the rhetorically Atticized language of most writers and spoken language had become too great, the necessity arose to transpose some of the most interesting, but not easily understandable, texts into a simpler form: Anna Komnene,⁵ Niketas Choniates,⁶ and so on. It may be suffi-

³Krumbacher, 787–96.

⁴G. Hatzidakis, *Einleitung in die neugriechische Grammatik* (Leipzig, 1892), 234–84.

⁵H. Hunger, *Anonyme Metaphrase zu Anna Komnene, Alexias XI–XIII* (Vienna, 1981).

⁶J. L. van Dieten, "Bemerkungen zur Sprache der sogenannten vulgärgriechischen Niketasparaphrase," *ByzF* 6 (1979), 37–77. *Nicetae Choniatae Historia*, Bonn ed. (1835): paraphrase in the app. crit.

cient to quote two examples of simplified vocabulary: *κοκκινάδα*, “redness” (metaphrase of Anna 411); and *κοκκινότης*, “redness” (paraphrase of Niketas 779).

Another sign of opposition against vernacular literature—and therefore dichotomy—can be seen in the contrary tendency to transform texts which contain certain vulgar elements of language into a pure Atticized form. This is manifested above all in the activity of Symeon Metaphrastes, but also of others, for instance the Phialites-recension of Monotropos’ *Dioptra*,⁷ as well as Atticized copies of Theodore Studites. We may also transpose the question of dichotomy or symbiosis of learned and vernacular literature in Byzantium to problems of modern research. I hope not to strain the reader’s attention too much by dealing with lexicography now. When Emmanouel Kriaras’ invaluable *Λεξικὸν τῆς μεσαιωνικῆς ἑλληνικῆς δημώδους γραμματείας*⁸ began to appear, I very soon became aware of his problems of delimitation. Why, for instance, did he at the beginning intend to include in his *κείμενα βασιικά* the romances of Makrembolites, Prodromos, Eugenianos, and Manasses? Perhaps because of his interest in Manasses’ vocabulary, which shows some affinity with popular literature, as we shall see later. I do not intend to repeat criticism⁹ on this occasion, but rather to focus the reader’s attention on the fact that Kriaras’ problems of delimitation were not so much his own, but those of the sources and, in my opinion, even more of traditional Byzantine studies, which prevented him from including at all or from dealing sufficiently with such missing links (from the linguistic point of view) as Neophytos Enkleistos, Kanaboutzes, the homilies of Neilos Bertos, the paraphrase of Choniates and, last but not least, documentary sources. What are, therefore, the practical consequences for lexicography? We should not restrict ourselves to the more or less Atticized texts, but look for any Byzantine text that might serve as a mediator between old and new vocabulary, so that the material offered by Kriaras will not remain “suspended in the air.” With regard to this our new lexicon of Byzantine Greek¹⁰ will not show a uniform aspect, but sometimes look like a mixed-pickles collection of rare archaistic and new medieval words taken from about 2,000 different works.

Now, by starting with the acknowledgment that a certain dichotomy of learned and vernacular literature was a reality, our task will be to trace signs of demotic Greek in Byzantine literature in order to find out if this accepted opposition was all-embracing or if a kind of symbiosis existed at some time, in some regions, in some genres, or in some authors and works. However, as I do not want to produce a long list of names and works, my paper will be concerned mainly with some of the currently defined branches of literature. There are three probable motives for an author to use more or less vernacular Greek: (1) inadequate classical training, (2) the wish for better understanding of the text by his readers, or (3) as a stylistic device. And the phenomenon of a double linguistic level in the same text may appear in different ways, either more formal or more essential: (1) the beginning and end are Atticized, while the main part is demotic, (2) vernacular tendencies in the same work can be due to vivid narration, quotation of original sayings, or satiric intention.

⁷H.-G. Beck, *Kirche und theologische Literatur im byzantinischen Reich* (Munich, 1959), 642.

⁸11 vols., *α-ξεαθάρα* (Thessalonike, 1968–90).

⁹E. Trapp, *Studien zur byzantinischen Lexikographie* (Vienna, 1988), 20–25.

¹⁰Idem, in *Lexicographica Byzantina* (Vienna, 1991), 283–91.

In the case of historiography or chronography, undoubtedly the most important genre of Byzantine literature and therefore the best known to scholars, it may be sufficient to allude to such authors as Theophanes, Genesios, the anonymous composer of the chronicle of Ioannina, Dukas, Sphrantzes, and Panaretos, who mixed archaizing language with many vulgar elements (the last-named, Panaretos, additionally offering some features of Pontic dialect), whereas others (Chronicle of the Morea, Leontios Machairas) are composed in a rather pure vernacular or rather dialectic idiom. Next to historiography we are used to considering geography, a genre which encompasses not only excerpts and rhetorical descriptions, but also works of a more practical aim. Some of the latter show the influence of demotic Greek: the *Patria* of Constantinople, John Kanaboutzes, and especially a few late medieval descriptions of the Holy Land as well as manuals for sailing (*portolani*).

But let us now deal particularly with romance, in order to show how classical tradition survives, revives, and then disappears, but not without influencing new medieval forms, although by that it would seem to be a case of transition rather than of symbiosis or opposition. As research has made much progress in this field, we can be sure nowadays that the works of Heliodoros and Achilles Tatios were read from the fifth until the eleventh century, when the first Byzantine imitator appeared. I am referring to Eustathios Makrembolites, whom Karl Plepelits¹¹ in his translation has recently dated to the time of Psellos, the author of a comparison of Tatios and Heliodoros. The proofs for this earlier dating are convincing, especially the identifying of Charidux (cf. Charitonimos for Ioannes) with the caesar John Doukas.¹² But Plepelits' hypothesis that Eustathios Makrembolites was not a real name and his assumption that John Doukas was the author are quite unacceptable. Besides the fact that Doukas was probably unable to compose such a work of Atticized style, both Eustathios and Makrembolites are completely normal names (Makrembolites occurs several times in the eleventh century, especially on seals.)¹³ So we can be quite certain that Eustathios Makrembolites dedicated his work to John Doukas, just as Psellos wrote some letters to him. Now the question of why from the twelfth century onward romances were composed in verse appears in a new light. Couldn't it have been that Byzantine secular romances, just revived by Makrembolites, as a consequence of the Crusades underwent Western influence and therefore preferred a poetic form? Let me end these short remarks by trying to give a hypothetical outline of romance literature. While the so-called sophistic love novels flourished from the second to the fourth century, they influenced to a certain degree the biographies of saints. This continued until the time when secular novels were no longer composed; hagiography then becoming the main vehicle of exciting reading. But when this genre ceased to flourish by the beginning of the eleventh century, the secular novel was reborn some time later and afterwards changed its face due to Western influence, at first only as to the poetic form, but during the Palaiologian period also in content and style. To put it differently, the reading public had access at all times to new exciting novels. And when Hans-Georg Beck¹⁴ speaks of Meliteniotes' poem "Εἰς τὴν

¹¹ *Hysmine and Hysminias*, trans. by K. Plepelits (Stuttgart, 1989), 1–6.69–73.

¹² D. Polemis, *The Doukai* (London, 1968), 34–41.

¹³ A. Kazhdan, *Social'nyj sostav gosподstvujushčego klassa Vizantii XI–XII vv.* (Moscow, 1974), 116, 136, 178, etc. *The Oxford Dictionary of Byzantium*, ed. A. Kazhdan (New York-Oxford, 1991), s.v.

¹⁴ H.-G. Beck, *Das byzantinische Jahrtausend* (Munich, 1978), 145.

σωφροσύνην” as a sort of “Gegenroman” because of its moral tendencies, I would rather prefer to consider it only as a product close to romance, like the moral poem ascribed to Manasses,¹⁵ or the demotic Περὶ δυστυχίας καὶ εὐτυχίας,¹⁶ all the more so since Meliteniotes shows strong connections with the Grottaferrata version of Digenes Akrites.¹⁷

Let us now examine how far the vocabulary of romances plays a part in the mediation between Atticized and vulgar literature. Although there can be no doubt that Manasses’ works in general belong to the former category, he makes use of a few nonclassical forms and especially displays a similar tendency to composite words as in the later popular romances (Kallimachos, Belthandros, and so on), an inclination apparently intensified by the common use of political verse. To avoid presenting a long list of words of interest merely to lexicography, I shall quote only one case which at the same time goes far beyond romance, namely compounds with γλυκο- instead of classical γλυκυ-. Whereas the use of the new simple form γλυκός itself is only attested at a later date, compounds with γλυκο- appear already from the fifth century onward. As for Manasses, he once used in his romance Aristandros and Kallithea the form γλυκόχυμος, “with sweet juice,” unnecessarily corrected by the editors to the “normal” γλυκύχυμος.¹⁸ A similar, although isolated, case is the form θηλομανής instead of the usual θηλυμανής, “mad after women,” which we can find both in Kriaras’ lexicon (taken from a late version of the Physiologos) and in the *Vita Basilii iunioris*.¹⁹

Let me now call your attention to Digenes Akrites in order to show that not only romances but also hagiography influenced epic. What about epics in Byzantium? If we restrict the term to heroic poetry, based upon some kinds of legends and oral tradition, only two works can be mentioned: the history of Belisarius and Digenes Akrites. The former concerns a historical personage, and its story developed step by step under the leitmotiv of “envy,” thus being influenced by later events, probably by the tragic figure of Alexios Philanthropenos.²⁰ Indeed, there can be no doubt that in this case the nucleus of the epic has been altered by moralizing elements with the effect of producing a primarily paraenetic poem.

Perhaps not during the Middle Ages, but certainly in modern times much more attention has been paid to the story of Digenes Akrites. Research on it has taken different directions: the tradition of the Greek and Old Russian versions, the question of priority of versions, language, historicity, composition, literary influences, and the problems of form. Nowadays some of these problems seem to be partly solved: the mutilated Escorial version²¹ in many points reflects a text more original than the Grottaferrata version; the Russian texts show many alterations as to the emperors episode, among others; the language was probably similar to the simplified Koine, largely used in *De ceremoniis* and *De administrando imperio*; Digenes as well as his father were not real persons but rather symbolic heroes. On the other hand, many details hint at the history and

¹⁵E. Miller, “Poème moral de Constantin Manassès,” *Annuaire de l’Association pour l’encouragement des études grecques en France* 9 (1875), 23–75.

¹⁶H.-G. Beck, *Geschichte der byzantinischen Volksliteratur* (Munich, 1971), 147.

¹⁷V. Tiftixoglu, “Digenes, das Sophrosyne Gedicht des Meliteniotes und der byzantinische Fünfehnssilber,” *BZ* 67 (1974), 1–63.

¹⁸cf. E. Trapp, “Textkritische Bemerkungen zum Roman des Konstantin Manasses,” *JÖB* 18 (1969), 75.

¹⁹S. Vilinskij, *Žitie sv. Vasilija Novago v russkoj literaturě* II (Odessa, 1911), 303.22.

²⁰Beck, *Volksliteratur*, 152.

²¹Βασίλειος Διγενής Ἀκρίτης, ed. S. Alexiou (Athens, 1985).

geography in particular of the ninth and tenth centuries; the poem must have been composed of several rather independent sections, partly due to oral tradition and thus perhaps helpful for Homeric research, and the epic material shows many features of romance, especially in the Grottaferrata version.

Let me now again take the opportunity to exhibit the resemblances of Digenes (especially of the G-version) to some lives of saints. A number of the same leitmotifs can be traced in both genres: conversion, rapid physical development of the hero, taming of a lion (by different means, of course), leaving the parents' home at a tender age, falling in love, living in the desert, meeting the emperor, encounter with a lonely woman who may be actually or nearly seduced by the hero, combat with a dragon, building activity, death of the parents, the hero's death simultaneous with that of his beloved companion, lamentation for the dead hero. While we can pass over similarities with the vitae of Theoctiste of Lesbos, Theodore Stratelates,²² and Lazaros of Mount Galesion,²³ which have already been noted, there are others not yet recognized. In the biography of Theophanes and Pansemne²⁴ we find the following common elements: Pansemne sees the already famous hermit Theophanes from her window and falls in love with him, they live together in the desert (in two cells side by side) until they die at the same moment, people mourn at their death. Seduction is a main theme in the legend of holy Martinianos²⁵ as well as in Digenes. As a handsome eighteen-year-old he went to the desert to live as a monk. The devil was angered by this, appeared before him as a dragon, transformed himself into a young man, uttered threats, and disappeared. At the devil's instigation soon afterwards a prostitute tried to seduce the monk, but he escaped the peril for his soul by walking on fire. However, the most curious resemblance with Digenes can be found in the quite unusual story of an arrogant monk who desired to become like Isaac, the Old Testament patriarch.²⁶ Suddenly the devil appeared in the guise of a soldier, entrusted to the monk a maiden, a servant, and money, and then left. The monk raped the girl, regretted his deed, but fearing discovery, killed the girl and her servant. Taking the money he went away, but after some events was finally hanged. What about Digenes according to the G-version? He seduced the daughter of Haplorabdes, felt remorse, and went to another region. And later on, having committed his second adultery with Maximo, he rode back and killed her. To summarize, we may say that although the hero's world is contrary to that of the holy man, their adventures and whole careers show certain resemblances, and in special cases can be starting points for mutual literary influence. The most extreme connecting link is, of course, the distorted picture of an anti-hero or anti-saint, who murders a woman he has seduced.

As to the linguistic evaluation of the main versions of Grottaferrata and Escorial,²⁷ on this occasion it may be sufficient to make only one remark. Although it is very prob-

²²E. Trapp, "Hagiographische Elemente im Digenes-Epos," *AnalBoll* 94 (1976), 275–87.

²³A. Kazhdan, "'Ο τέλειος μοναχὸς ἢ ὁ τέλειος πολεμιστής," *Δωδώνη* 15 (1986), 203–17.

²⁴E. de Stoop, "La vie de Théophane et de Pansemnê," *Musée Belge* 15 (1911), 313–29.

²⁵P. Rabbow, "Die Legende des Martinian," *Wiener Studien* 17 (1895), 253–93; cf. also A. Kazhdan, "Byzantine Hagiography and Sex in the Fifth to Twelfth Centuries," *DOP* 44 (1990), 131–43.

²⁶J. Wortley, "A 'Narratio' of Rare Distinction: De Monacho Superbo, *BHG* 1450x," *AnalBoll* 100 (1982), 351–63.

²⁷cf. E. Trapp, "'Ο λεξικός πλούτος τοῦ Διγενῆ Ἀκρίτη στό πλαίσιο τῆς μὴ δημώδους βυζαντινῆς λογοτεχνίας," *Ἀριάδνη* 5 (1989), 185–92.

able that the supposed original was composed in a mixed language, which the redactor of the G-version strived to Atticize on the one hand and that of the E-version to vulgarize on the other, several times we meet the reverse tendency.

Let us now return briefly to the aforementioned poem of Meliteniotes, whom most scholars, following Franz Dölger, have identified with the astronomer Theodore. However, there seems to be another candidate, too, namely Demetrios Meliteniotes,²⁸ who owned a manuscript of Achilles Tatios. If we ask now why this poem bears on our question, it is again vocabulary that links it partially to the popular literature: for instance ἐρωτοτιτρώσκω, “wound through love,” occurs in Phlorios; κοκκινοβεβαμμένος, “red dyed,” in the conflated Digenes-version Z; and κοκκινοπορφυρίζω, “be purple-red,” in the satiric poem of Krasopateras (the “wine father”).²⁹

To conclude this section, it seems necessary to add some words on the romance of Alexander the Great, which has been one of the most widespread stories of all European literature. Scholars have not only edited many different Greek versions, but have also outlined the main branches of the tradition up to the eighth-century version ε.³⁰ Afterwards, however, there is a great gap, to be filled with at least one more remodeled text, which in any case must have been the prototype for a Slavonic, or rather Serbian, adaptation. And only this latter version was retranslated circa 1500 into vulgar Greek, a quite unusual fact which can be proved not only by a vast number of misunderstandings as to names and whole phrases,³¹ but also by some adopted Slavonic words like νεμάλο, “not little.” Thus, this product can no longer be considered as a piece of genuine Byzantine popular literature.

If we do accept the existence of different genres, what should we do with satire? Is it true that we meet it as a separate form only in popular literature, whereas some learned (and even prosaic) examples were subordinated by Herbert Hunger to learned poetry, and that we do not find it at all in theology? Since Krumbacher's time, when speaking of Byzantine satire belonging to “Vulgärgriechische Literatur,” we are used to starting with Ptochoprodromos, afterwards passing on to some poems on natural history, quadrupeds, birds, fish, and fruit. If we accept as evidence of their origin in satiric dialogues (the latter being written more or less in the classical tradition as to their outward form and choice of themes) their use of mainly vernacular language and their reference to contemporary life without any reverence for ancient tradition, this seems to be right. But then we should also focus our attention on a work by John Katrares. Working mainly as a philologist in Thessaloniki in the fourteenth century, he is also known by a poem addressed to his adversary Neophytos Momitzilas Prodromenos.³² What are the popular features of this satiric work? First of all the language, for although Katrares mainly uses Atticism, he often abandons it without any reserve in favor of demoticism, apparently in order to mock his opponent. Let me quote some examples:

²⁸ *PLP*, nr. 17849.

²⁹ cf. E. Miller, “Poème allégorique de Méliténiote,” *Notices et extraits des manuscrits de la bibliothèque impériale* 19.2 (Paris, 1858), vv. 390, 2844, 867, with the references given by Kriaras' lexicon.

³⁰ *Vita Alexandri regis Macedonum*, ed. J. Trümpf (Stuttgart, 1974).

³¹ cf. the most detailed study by U. Moennig, *Die spätbyzantinische Rezension *ζ des Alexanderromans* (Cologne, 1992).

³² ed. I. Dujčev, in *Sbornik na Bulgarska Akademiia na nauk XLI-1* (Sofia, 1945), 130–50; cf. *PLP*, nrs. 11544, 19254.

v. 14f, δαιμονιάριν καλογέριν / καὶ τρελλὸν φιλοσοφούδιν, “maniac monk and crazy little philosopher”; v. 59, κομμάτα, “a great piece”; v. 80, ματζουκάτος, “bearing a stick”; v. 83, ἔπαιζε καὶ τὸ θαμπούριν, “he also played the lute” (a word occurring in the E-version of Digenes); v. 184f, δότε μ’ ὀλίγον χαβιάριν, νὰ πλανήσω τὸ ψωμὶν μου, “give me a little caviar, that I disregard my bread.” These and some other verses could be characterized as elements of stylistic variation, but they also suit the use of octosyllabic verses, which in late Byzantium had increasingly become a domain of popular literature (remember the Iliad of Hermoniakos, the Ptocholeon, oracles, and others). Thus this satire by Katrares certainly is to be regarded as an immediate link between learned and popular literature, by its tenor belonging probably more to the latter genre, like the vulgar poems of Ptochoprodromos. With regard to language, the poetic praise of the town Theodoro-Mangup (Dory) in the Crimea, composed by a monk Matthew in 1395, as well as the εἰσιτήριοι (entrance verses) for Agnes of France offer a similar problem of classification.³³

To turn to the coexistence of theology and satire, a connection may be shown by one work, namely the anti-Unionist dispute of Constantine Panagiotes with the cardinal Euphrosynos.³⁴ Although the historicity of this dialogue is more than doubtful (it seems to me to be a fictitious work of the fourteenth century, when legends directed against Michael VIII were composed on Mount Athos),³⁵ and it is not quite certain to have come down to us in its original linguistic form, we may state that at least its beginning is as typical of popular satirical literature as of theological polemics. It starts with a scene in which the latinophile Bekkos arrived at Constantinople together with twelve cardinals, who led the pope’s mule, saddled and bearing his portrait within a basket. Then Emperor Michael grasped the reins, bowed before the picture, wished Pope Gregory a long life and took the mule into the courtyard of his palace. Having convoked both Latin and Greek theologians, he ordered a discussion between Panagiotes and Euphrosynos—the famous rhetorician Holobolos, who appears as a teacher of the wisest Blemmydes (!), had not been accepted by the cardinals because of his corpulence (οὐκ ἐδέξαντο διὰ τὸ πολύσαρκον αὐτοῦ). Then the dialogue starts with boasting on both sides: the cardinal related that they had acquired a huge cabbage to whose root 102 horses were bound, none of whom was able to hear the whinnying of the others; the Greek countered by asserting that 102 coppersmiths, whose hammering likewise could not be perceived by one another, had forged a cauldron in order to boil such cabbages. As to the demotic vocabulary occurring in this work, let me just quote three compounds: σελλοχαλινωμένος, “saddled and bridled” (p. 311); κουρεψογένειος, “with shaved beard” (p. 323); and κοκκινοφόρος, “wearing a red dress” (p. 327).

Now let us consider other branches of religious literature. Omitting earlier examples of hagiography, especially of the seventh century, I first want to refer to the supposed translation of the Arabic Koran (probably dating to the beginning of the ninth cen-

³³ cf. H. Hunger, *Die hochsprachliche profane Literatur der Byzantiner* II (Munich, 1978), 148 (Matthew); M. Jeffreys, “The Vernacular εἰσιτήριοι For Agnes of France,” *Byzantina Australiensia* 1 (Canberra, 1981), 101–15 (Agnes).

³⁴ N. Krasnosel’cev, “Prenie Panagiota s Azimitom,” *Ljetopisj isotoriko-filologičeskago občestva pri Imperatorskom novorossijskom universitetje . . . Vizantijskoe otdjelenie* 3 (Odessa, 1896), 295–328.

³⁵ cf. J. Koder, “Patres Athonenses Latinophilis occisi sub Michaele VIII,” *JÖB* 18 (1969), 87f.

ture),³⁶ although one may argue that this could not be a subject of true Byzantine literature. Compare the words δαιμονιάρης, όσπίτιν, σκυλίν, όρδινος, καβαλάριος, καμήσια, άπλώνω, έπάνω instead of ύπέρ, as well as some demotic forms in morphology and syntax. More examples can be found in other theological polemics against Islam: in the dialogue of the monk Euthymios (μουρτεύω, “to struggle against”; χαζινάς, “treasury”; άχούριν, “stable”)³⁷ and in Bartholomew of Edessa³⁸ (one of many examples 80,15f: καί έφουσάτευσεν εκ νέων ό Μουχάμετ καταπάνω τους καί έλθών εις τόν Μακά έτζάκισεν τούς Άρραβας, “and Mohammed campaigned afresh against them and, having come to Mekka, crushed the Arabs”).

What about homilies? Although they were in a somewhat similar position to their secular counterparts, on rare occasions they might adapt elements of popular style, because their main goal was religious edification rather than a display of knowledge of ancient Greek authors. Homilists who use a lot of vulgarisms as Neophytos Enkleistos (σαράκοντα, for instance, as well as a few dialectic Cypriot features) and Neilos Bertos, living in Rhodes after the fall of Constantinople, who uses γυναίκα and άνδρας interchangeably with γυνή and άνήρ and so on.³⁹ But these theological writers had forerunners, first of all Theodore Studites, who already circa 800 had abandoned the traditionally high-styled fields of theological literature and tried to reach the common people by making considerable concessions to spoken language, such as καλοκαίριον, πρωτοσπαθαρέα instead of πρωτοσπαθάρισσα, the hortative particle άς, and vulgar declension of nouns, for instance πλάκαν and σπάνη instead of σπάνις.⁴⁰ Somewhat similar to him was Philippos Monotropos in the eleventh century, who in his ascetic poem Dioptra sometimes seems to have used demotic forms for the sake of a more drastic or perhaps even satiric speech, as in the verses πτωχούτζικον γυμνούτζικον καί δυσειδή την θέαν / λαβδούτζικον ισχνούτζικον καί κατηυτελισμένον, “the poor little naked and ugly-looking, knock-kneed, spindly, and miserable man.”⁴¹

There still remains the most important sphere, normally not admitting any features of vernacular language and therefore a case of dichotomy: secular rhetoric, which Byzantine educated men used as the main vehicle to link themselves by mimesis to their Greek ancestors, and which is found especially in official speeches and epistolography. The very few instances showing the contrary should be considered as exceptions proving the rule. That Greek epistolography always had been a bulwark of Atticism cannot be doubted, all the more so as the ordinary letters of everyday life were not regarded as literary works and were therefore scarcely preserved for future generations. Yet there are a few letters, written by famous learned writers, which cannot be considered completely alien to literature (unlike some merely official vernacular documents). In 1452 Patriarch Gennadios Scholarios directed a letter to the clerics who were against church union.⁴² There he introduces into his mainly high-styled text (which includes for in-

³⁶cf. E. Trapp, “Gab es eine byzantinische Koranübersetzung?” *Diptycha* 2 (1980–81), 7–17.

³⁷E. Trapp, “Die Dialexis des Mönchs Euthymios mit einem Sarazenen,” *JÖB* 20 (1971), 112f.

³⁸*Bartholomaios von Edessa, Confutatio Agareni*, ed. K.-P. Todt (Würzburg, 1988).

³⁹B. Schartau, “Nathanaelis Berti Monachi sermones quattuordecim,” *Cahiers de l’institut du moyen-âge grec et latin* 12 (1974), 11–85.

⁴⁰G. Fatouros in *Lexicographica Byzantina* (Vienna, 1991), 126f.

⁴¹cf. W. Hörandner, “Notizen zu Philippos Monotropos,” *Byzantinica* 13.2 (1985), 824.

⁴²*Oeuvres Complètes de Georges Scholarios*, ed. L. Petit, X. A. Siderides, M. Jugie, 8 vols. (Paris, 1928–36), III, 166–70.

stance quite a lot of optative forms) some vulgar elements: σᾶς, ἔνε, θέλει νὰ εἰπῇ τίποτε, ἀκόμη, ἃς ἔνε, νὰ ἔλθωσιν ἐδῶ, θέλω τοὺς καταπεῖσειν, and so on. On the other hand correspondence in colloquial Greek seems to occur especially in communication with foreigners. Circa 1402 Joseph Bryennios sent a letter to a certain Giannule de Spiga in Crete,⁴³ where only the first sentence and the last word σωθεῖητε, “farewell,” remained as vestiges of the standard forms. And in 1465 Cardinal Bessarion wrote three vernacular letters to the retinue of Thomas Palaiologos’ children,⁴⁴ but by using Attic formulas especially at the beginning and end of his letter he tried to conserve the outward aspect of tradition.

While these letters were written in the vernacular in order to be better understood by their addressees, vernacular Greek could also be used for stylistic purposes. Theodore Laskaris, one of the most learned emperors, in some of his letters⁴⁵ to his friend and chief adviser George Mouzalon inserted demotic words on purpose, thus animating, evidently for amusement, his personal communications by ignoring the strict prescriptions of Atticism in epistolography: κρασοφόρος (p. 188), “wine-bearer”; ζαρκουλάτος (p. 188), perhaps “weeder”; κλοτζιζω (p. 188) and τζινεύω (p. 179), “kick” (the former occurring only much later in the vulgar satire of Spanos, the latter corresponding to modern τσινῶ); κουτζεύομαι (p. 180), “limp”; χαβιάρια (p. 54), “caviar”; σαχαλίκια (p. 54), “sausage” (as it seems). Rather differently, for the mere purpose of derision Mazaris in his journey to the underworld quotes some popular sayings, pretending that they were particular to the Tzakonians.⁴⁶ Another partial symbiosis of learned and vernacular literature concerns the much appreciated, superstition-based pseudosciences, especially astrology, dream interpretation, oracles, and iatrosophia, the lowest form of medical treatises. Over the course of time the language of this entire literature became more or less influenced by demotic vocabulary and grammar, as can be seen not only in many anonymous late astrological excerpts, but also in genuine literary productions, such as a poem by John Kamateros dedicated to Emperor Manuel Komnenos, as well as later copies of dream books like that of Achmet. That this type of literature developed apparently far from the strict rules of Atticism may be underlined by the fact that copyists did not shrink from ascribing these works to famous authors such as Patriarch Nikephoros I, Emperor Leo VI, or Michael Psellos. As to oracles, they could be seen as connected with biblical apocrypha (it may be sufficient to refer to the Testamentum Salomonis⁴⁷) and with apocalypses like the one ascribed to Leo of Constantinople,⁴⁸ all of them showing a clear tendency toward vulgarization, especially in later manuscript tradition. They were mostly ascribed to Leo VI, but also to others such as Methodios of Patara, being transmitted in manuscripts along with philosophical, historical, theological and other texts, and sometimes even being illustrated.⁴⁹ Originally written in learned language in dodecasyllables, later they became mixed with demotic

⁴³ A. Papadopoulos-Kerameus, *Varia Graeca Sacra*, *Zapiski istoriko filologicheskago fakulteta Imperatorskago S.-Petersburgskago universiteta* 95 (1909), 293f.

⁴⁴ L. Mohler, *Kardinal Bessarion*, III (Paderborn, 1942), 531–38.

⁴⁵ *Theodori Ducae Lascaris Epistulae CCXVII*, ed. N. Festa (Florence, 1898).

⁴⁶ *Mazaris’ Journey to Hades*, Arethusa Monographs V (New York, 1975), 64.

⁴⁷ *The Testament of Solomon*, ed. Ch. McCown (Leipzig, 1922).

⁴⁸ R. Maisano, *L’Apocalisse apocrifa di Leone di Costantinopoli* (Naples, 1975).

⁴⁹ A. Rigo, *Oracula Leonis* (Venice, 1988).

verses written in octosyllables and thus underwent linguistic influence.⁵⁰ But on the other hand almost none of these more recent oracles was written in a totally vulgar language and, besides, some learned vestiges (quotation of a psalm, a few dodecasyllables) remained. Let me end this part by mentioning a rite of exorcism, which contains a short vernacular section recommending that a possessed person should be cured by putting ground mustard into the nose, and by other remedies.⁵¹

A desire for realism and liveliness of narration led several authors to use a more popular diction. This seems to be true for John of Antioch in the last preserved part of his work concerning contemporary history as well as for John Kananos, when he reports the climax of the siege of Constantinople. Niphon, monk of Mount Athos, and two of the other fourteenth-century biographers of Maximos Kausokalybes,⁵² followed a somewhat different path, as to some extent did the historian Sphrantzes,⁵³ who lived at court: direct speeches and short utterances of other monks or persons of public life are introduced apparently in their original form, thus offering very instructive and convincing instances of linguistic symbiosis in literature.

Atticizing writers ignored popular language and literature for the most part, but there were important exceptions, for instance, Eustathios of Thessalonike, who often showed a philological interest in the living language. The same can be found in the short grammar of Gennadios Scholarios, which contains many demotic words,⁵⁴ and at a much lower level in some scholia and lexica. As to literature, we shall deal now with a hitherto unnoticed passage taken from Theodore Agallianos, who was a high patriarchal official and has been identified with Theophanes, metropolitan of Medeia in Thrace. In an apologetic speech of 1463, complaining about envy among church dignitaries, he wrote as follows: "Which emperor ever accused of treason a general who readily fought for the army, bravely resisted the enemy and rushed against them, nearly beyond his strength, by all means and devices, but unexpectedly fell into an ambush and lost many of his men, unless one mentions Belisarios, whom fate elevated and envy blinded?"⁵⁵ This very last phrase, εἰ μὴ Βελισσάριον εἶποι τις, ὃν ἡ τύχη ὕψωσε καὶ ὁ φθόνος ἐτύφλωσεν, occurs with very slight alterations in two versions of the now so-called Βελισσαριάδα, the moralizing late Byzantine poem on Belisarios.⁵⁶ This quotation is noteworthy since the late Georgillias adaptation (written 1498/9) shows the closest resemblance: τὸν ὃν ἡ τύχη ὕψωσε καὶ ἐτύφλωσεν ὁ φθόνος (v. 694). The Viennese manuscript (dated toward 1520) of the oldest version has the meter incorrect, ὃν ὁ χρόνος ὕψωσεν καὶ ὁ φθόνος ἐτυφλῶσεν. By combining these two variants it seems, therefore, that Agallianos cites the original or at least an older form of the verse. And above all he alluded to this popular poem just as to any other literary source, obviously convinced

⁵⁰ AKPOΘINIA (Vienna, 1964), 83ff.

⁵¹ L. Delatte, "Un office byzantin d'exorcisme," *Mémoires de l'Académie de Belgique, Classe des lettres*, Ser. 2, 52.1 (Brussels, 1957), 31.

⁵² D. Kourilas and F. Halkin, "Deux vies de S. Maxime le Kausokalybe," *AnalBoll* 54 (1936), 38–112; for ex. p. 49, 22 "Καρτέρει με, Καυσοκαλύβη, νὰ φάγωμεν," and p. 50, 46 "Τριάντα δονκάτα ἔχω" and so on.

⁵³ For instance, p. 28, 10 (ed. R. Maisano, Rome, 1990) "δὸς πρὸς τὸν Σφραντζῆν τὸ καβάδι, τὸ μολυβὸν χαμουχᾶν τὸ μετὰ βαρεοκοιλίας ἐνδεδυμένον, καὶ ἅς ἔχη καὶ τὸ σεντούκιν."

⁵⁴ ed. Petit-Siderides-Jugie, VIII, 425–98.

⁵⁵ Ch. Patriceles, "Ὁ Θεόδωρος Ἀγαλλιανός (Athens, 1966), 140.1779–84.

⁵⁶ *Ἱστορία τοῦ Βελισσαρίου*, ed. W. Bakker and A. Gemert (Athens, 1988), 232.

that he would be understood by readers who did not feel any opposition between high and low levels of language and literature. Thus we have a short, but instructive, example of symbiosis between learned and popular literature, which may be supplemented by the fact that Agallianos once uses the demotic word *τζουλούκος* (l. 688).

Sometimes it is a single, but rather rare, word that may show a link between different levels of language and literature. In modern Greek dialects the word *ἀποτσιγγρώνω* can be found with the meaning “to frown, to make grimaces”; it has been derived from *ἀποτιγγρώνω*, “make a face like a tiger, grin,” first used by Arethas of Caesarea in his scholia on Strabo.⁵⁷ But also later on this word met with the interest of Byzantine philologists: the obviously somewhat corrupt form *ἀποτζιγγρόω* is to be found in a rhetorical glossary,⁵⁸ while Eustathios in his commentaries on Homer preferred the metathetic spelling *ἀποστιγγρόω* and *ἀποστίγγρωσις*, “grin.”⁵⁹ Moreover, we can quote the simple form *τζιγγ(γ)ράνω* from the *Vita Basilii iunioris*⁶⁰ with the altered meaning “to make a mournful face,” and finally *τσιγκριάζω*, “wrinkle,” from the Escorial version of Digenes Akrites.⁶¹

Signs of coexistence of Attic and demotic forms can sometimes be found in proper names as well. One should note, for example, that John Chortasmenos, a fluent writer of archaistic prose (his attempts to show his ability as a poet having on the other hand completely failed,⁶² never used for his name the archaistic *Κεχορτασμένος*, as did at the same time in Constantinople two insignificant persons.⁶³ The famous philosopher George Gemistos proceeded just the other way round when altering his evidently medieval vulgar name to *Πλήθων*.

Having thus underlined a certain gradation and occasionally interpenetration of educated and popular speech, we might be inclined to fix limits. And we might perhaps separate the Greek literature written in Cretan dialect by regarding it as an essentially new development partly depending on Western literature. In any case the ground for the development of a real dichotomy was laid during the Turkokratia, when Greek education decayed and the church became the only center of conservatism. Only then were pure vernacular adaptations of historical and theological works composed. On the other hand it was no longer possible to fit original quotations of classical texts into works of lower style, as many Byzantine poets had done before. To illustrate this, let me add one example taken from two related versions of Digenes. In the Trebizond manuscript, representing the conflated version of the fifteenth century, the Homeric quotation *ἔξαύδα, μὴ κεῦθε τῷ νῶ* (*νοῶ* Homer, *Iliad* 1,363), *ἵνα εἶδομεν ἄμφω* (T 1220), being a hexameter as well as a political verse, appears in the nearly pure form. The later manuscript of Athens, rather remote from the original phrase, transposed this completely to modern Greek, *Μὴ κρύψης γνώμην εἰς τὸν νοῦν νὰ μὴν φθαρῇς ἀτός σου* (A 1808).⁶⁴

⁵⁷ Σ. Β. Κουγέα, Αἱ ἐν τοῖς σχολίοις τοῦ Ἀρέθα λαογραφικαὶ εἰδήσεις, *Λαογραφία* 4 (1912–13), 263f.

⁵⁸ Bekker, *Anecdota*, 1418.

⁵⁹ Eust. 879,35; 1416, 31.

⁶⁰ p. 27, 29 (cf. note 19).

⁶¹ Digenes Akrites, ed. S. Alexiou (Athens, 1985) v. 1520.

⁶² H. Hunger, *Johannes Chortasmenos* (Vienna, 1969), 38–40.

⁶³ *PLP*, 11683f.

⁶⁴ P. Kalonaros, *Βασίλειος Διγενῆς Ἀκρίτης* I (Athens, 1941), p. 104.

The same happened to the quotations of Gregory of Nazianzos in the next verses (A 1811–14).

In fact it seems that authors of vernacular Byzantine works often tried to present a learned character. Many examples can be found without great difficulty, especially when a popular author wishes to cite verses of the Bible. Thus at the end of the Παιδιόφραστος διήγησις τῶν ζώων τῶν τετραπόδων, “entertaining (perhaps also educating) story of the quadrupeds,”⁶⁵ are two lines which are rather skillfully adapted from Ps. 32:16, Ὁ βασιλεὺς οὐ σώζεται ἐν τῇ πολλῇ δυνάμει / καὶ γίγας οὐ σωθήσεται ἐν πλήθει τῆς ἰσχύος, “Neither the king nor a giant will be saved by his strength.” In contrast to this the composer of a vulgar oracle⁶⁶ was unable to fit a quotation into his poem and interrupted his flow of octosyllabic verses by three prose lines (oracle 1:317–9 = Ps. 79:15f). Sometimes the interest in antiquity led only to an inappropriate addition: at the end of the Achilleid one adaptor added some verses concerning the real ancient legend. And the poor dodecasyllabic introduction to the Grottaferrata version of Digenes is an instance of formal connection with Byzantine standard poetry. By these means authors of popular works evidently wanted to link themselves to learned literature, which is again to be understood as a matter of linguistic compromise and symbiosis.

At the end of Byzantium, when Greek language had nearly completely developed to its modern stage, the cleft between Atticized and vernacular literature became so great that people lost their direct link to the knowledge of Homer—apart from the Bible the embodiment of ancient Greek literature—and had to content themselves with such undistinguished derivative works as the Πόλεμος τῆς Τρωάδος, based on a Western model and thus a sort of counterpart to the Slavonic-Greek Alexander. But even then, when knowledge of ancient Greek decayed under foreign rule and law was also vulgarized, τό γλωσσικό ζήτημα was not the burning issue that it became in modern times. In particular, the great Cretan poet Chortatzes occasionally incorporated some archaistic linguistic elements into his style (for instance, διδάσκαλος and ὀφθαλμός).⁶⁷ The fact that vocabulary has remained a strong link of ancient and modern Greek language even up to recent times can certainly be proved by many examples, let me just quote two contrasting pairs: κρασί - οἶνοπωλεῖον, ψωμί - ἄρτοπωλεῖον/-πώλης (the genuine demotic ψωμοπώλης, apparently now not used, is found in Balsamon).⁶⁸

If we review our observations, mainly taken from the sources, on probable symbiosis, we may state that it was not only authors without solid classical education, but also quite often learned writers who deliberately used demotic Greek, either for practical reasons in order to be better comprehended or for stylistic purposes or, generally, to propagate a style composed of both learned and vernacular elements and thus to reconcile them, although somewhat artificially. However let us keep in mind that the language of Homer was an artificial one too.

In order to illustrate the development of views with just one example, I want to cite a few phrases taken from Kriaras’ paper “Diglossie des derniers siècles de Byzance,”

⁶⁵ ed. V. Tsiouni (Munich, 1972); cf. my review in *BZ* 69 (1976), 444–46.

⁶⁶ cf. note 50.

⁶⁷ K. Pedonia, *Τά λόγια γλωσσικά στοιχεῖα στὰ ἔργα τοῦ Χορτάτση* (Ioannina, 1977), 92f, 123f.

⁶⁸ PG 138, col. 773c.

read at the Congress at Oxford in 1966. Nowadays we cannot completely agree with his statements: "Le public auquel s'adressent les oeuvres en langue archaïsante diffère de celui qu'intéressent les oeuvres en langue plus populaire. Chacune de ces productions a ses écrivains et son autorité. La littérature officielle et archaïsante ignorait l'existence de la littérature populaire. Celle-ci suivait son propre destin sans s'occuper des progrès de la première."⁶⁹ As we know, there were not a few writers using both levels of language (Prodromos, Glykas, Anagnostes, Bryennios, Bessarion, Plusiadenos, and others). And their milieu as well as their public was not necessarily different, as Beck showed long ago by proving definitively that the romance of Kallimachos was composed around 1300 by Andronikos Palaiologos, a cousin of the homonymous emperor and author of a dialogue against the Jews. Certainly John Kamateros should be included in the relatively small, but still growing, number of authors who made use of different levels of language: one of his astrological poems is composed in learned dodecasyllables, the other in verses of fifteen syllables presenting many features of colloquial language (for instance, the expression ἀνάσχελα, "on the back").⁷⁰

To end my remarks on the theme of dichotomy and symbiosis of learned and popular Byzantine literature, I want to stress that my aim has not been to erase any difference of language, style, and themes, thus depicting the imaginary situation of a vast mass of more or less mixed forms, but to show by the sources themselves that living together and interaction were sometimes stronger than antagonism or mutual ignorance. And I am quite sure that future editing, commenting, and studying of all kinds of medieval Greek literature will produce even more examples of symbiosis than of separation.

How should we now view the traditional division and classification of Byzantine literature, as initiated by Krumbacher, and especially the tripartite grouping of theological, learned secular, and vulgar literature, mostly followed by Beck and Herbert Hunger? Should not at least the canon of popular literature, as established by modern scholars, be reconsidered and widened? But on the other hand, as the tendency to linguistic symbiosis sometimes proceeded from learned authors, why should we separate their works? And to conclude with a question of a rather doubtful literary dichotomy, what about some works by Nikolaos Kabasilas Chamaetos? With regards to the formerly so-called Anti-Zealot Discourse and others, should they better be classified under theological literature as Beck did, or were they intended as philosophical or, more precisely, ethico-political treatises, although Hunger did not deal with them?

Finally, let me delineate in a few words a desirable perspective for future studies on Byzantine literature:

(1) the synchronic aspect, to stress more the whole personality of an author within his milieu;⁷¹

(2) the diachronic aspect, to describe better tendencies and motifs without looking exclusively at classification concerning secularity, theology, language, and genres;

⁶⁹ Thirteenth International Congress of Byzantine Studies, Main Papers IX (Oxford, 1966), 17.

⁷⁰ Εἰσαγωγή ἀστορονομίας, ed. L. Weigl (Leipzig, 1908), v. 178.

⁷¹ cf. A. Kazhdan, "Der Mensch in der byzantinischen Literaturgeschichte," *JÖB* 28 (1979), 1–21.

(3) the lexical aspect: it is my hope that our lexicon of Byzantine Greek, especially by reflecting the variegated nature of medieval Greek texts, will become a helpful instrument not only for language, but for an improved knowledge of literature, as well.

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